
PREFACE

What is an I-Search? It originates from the word *research*, which makes most of us think of schools, universities, and labs. While these settings lend themselves to research, I-Search is not a word or process only for the educational setting. Everyone I-Searches in many different ways and for many different reasons. Ken Macrorie, author of *The I-Search Paper*, describes the I-Search as a project where a person conducts a search to find out something he needs to know for his own life and writes the story of his adventure (1988). It is an inquiry-based process that compels students to move away from the traditional research report format in which they restate old information (Macrorie, 1988). We found that this process empowers our students and brings out their curiosity and love of learning while laying a foundation for building a community of lifelong learners.

We I-Search when we shop for a new car, decide on a college major, look for a new job, and try to find the right area in which to live. We all have questions we want answered and some of us want and need the opportunity to find answers to questions we do not even know we have. I-Searching is fun, rewarding, and essential. What better gift to give our children than the ability to research a problem, whether it be the best bike to buy or writing a history term paper? Giving our children the lifelong ability to solve information problems and make well-thought-out decisions is priceless.

How does an I-Search accomplish these goals? The past several years we have researched, questioned, and concluded that children learn best when they are given opportunities for exploration and to make decisions about their learning. This type of learning is based on Bloom's Taxonomy of higher-order thinking. Using the I-Search process, children move from a basic knowledge level of learning to the higher levels of analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluation when working with information problems. With this approach, students discover the ability to:

- Develop their own questions.
- Seek answers through research and interviews.
- Record in note form the information that they find.
- Produce and present products based on their research.
- Evaluate those products and processes through the use of rubrics and other evaluation instruments.

This utilization of Bloom's Taxonomy has provided a solid theoretical base to construct an information problem-solving model

to guide the I-Search process. *I-Search, You Search, We All Learn to Research* is geared specifically to elementary students. This book will help a variety of educators understand and develop discovery opportunities for their students:

- Undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in elementary education and library/information studies programs.
- Elementary administrators, team leaders, curriculum directors, and subject coordinators.
- Practicing elementary teachers and librarians.

This book is organized in five sections. Each section represents one of the five steps of the information problem-solving model children employ with the I-Search process. This five-step process will also help educators organize the I-Search unit. These steps are:

Step 1: What do I want to know?

Step 2: Where can I find the answers?

Step 3: How will I record the information that I find?

Step 4: How will I show what I learned?

Step 5: How will I know I did a good job?

This book shows “how to” teach the I-Search process from start to finish. It is organized in such a way that will help students and teachers who are new to information problem solving and the I-Search. It will also be helpful to those who would like to implement the philosophy a little at a time and find strategies that will be of use in current units of study. Finally, for those who have done I-Searches with their elementary students, we will provide some additional ideas and suggestions that may be helpful.

This educational journey facilitates meaningful experiences and empowers all those involved. We believe that this adventure in learning will lay a solid foundation and equip children with the confidence and competence to become lifelong learners and effective users of information.